

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

Don Diego de la Viña and the Philippine Revolution in Negros Oriental

Caridad Aldecoa Rodriguez

Philippine Studies vol. 34, no. 1 (1986) 61–76

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Don Diego de la Viña and the Philippine Revolution in Negros Oriental

CARIDAD ALDECOA RODRIGUEZ

PRELUDE TO REVOLUTION

In July 1897, Don Antonio Ferrer y Puyoles was appointed *Gobernador Politico-Militar* of Negros Oriental. As late as 5 April 1898, Gov. Ferrer, writing to the Governor General about the existing conditions in the province, reported that "the inhabitants of this province are peaceful in character, that no associations whether authorized or secret exists, and that no person because of his past conduct deserves to be watched."¹ By then the Revolution against Spain had been going on for two years in Luzon. It could be that Ferrer was not aware of such behavior in Negros Oriental. But Pedro Baguio of Guihulngan and Diego de la Viña of Vallehermoso had already been reported by the chief of civil guards stationed in Negros for providing a place for training men to handle rifles, and for constructing a house as a secret meeting place, respectively.²

When Manila fell to the Americans on 13 August 1898 and there was no hope of holding Luzon, the Spanish government retreated to Iloilo. In his desperate effort to have the continued support of the Visayas, Diego de los Rios, Spanish Commanding General for Visayas and Mindanao, ordered that an assembly be convened in Iloilo on 15 November 1898.³ It was to include the

1. "Report of Gov. P.M. Antonio Ferrer," 5 April 1898, *Costa Oriental de la Isla de Negros*.

2. *Sucesos de Negros desde de Octubre 1896 A Febrero de 1898*. A pamphlet consisting mostly of *guardia civil* reports, U.S.T. Library, p. 17.

3. Angel Martinez Cuesta, *History of Negros* (Manila: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1980), p. 448.

most prominent persons from the Visayas in order to get the most reliable opinion regarding Spain. In Negros Oriental the election of the representatives to the Iloilo assembly was held on All Saints Day, November 1, at the *casa tribunal*. The election was attended by the municipal captains and the influential persons of the towns. One of those who participated was Don Diego de la Viña of Vallehermoso. The Spaniards did not realize that this was an opportunity for people to meet secretly on their plans to revolt in the province whenever the opportune time would come. "Their participation in the election was merely a camouflage."⁴

BOYHOOD AND EARLY LIFE

Don Diego de la Viña was born on 20 May 1849, in the district of Binondo, Manila. His father was an engineer from the city of Oviedo, province of Asturias, Spain, who came to the Philippines to seek his fortune. In Manila, he met and married Damiana de la Rosa, daughter of a rich Chinese merchant and a native mother. The marriage was blessed with five children and Diego was the eldest child.⁵ Young Diego grew up in Binondo and studied at the "Escuela Superior" in his early years. His father thought it best to send Diego to Spain to study in his Alma Mater, the University of Oviedo. Here he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.⁶ On his return to Manila, he married Apolonía de la Cruz, a *tagala*. Young de la Viña and his wife went to Cebu to work in his father's coal mines at Alpako, a barrio of Naga. When a strong typhoon destroyed the coal mine, Diego de la Viña, together with his family, migrated to Binalbagan, a town in the southern part of Negros Occidental. There he bought a tract of land and planted it to sugar cane. Although quite successful, Diego was not contented. In the first place, there was no room for expansion, for the lands around were already owned by big *hacenderos* like the Yulos. In the second place he had a misunderstanding with the local parish priest. Then his wife died leaving four children in his care. Finally, a strong typhoon causing heavy floods destroyed his sugar cane plantation. These misfortunes forced him to cross the mountain

4. Ibid.

5. Interview with Mrs. Baleria Española, whose first husband was a nephew of Don Diego de la Viña, at Canlaon City, 14 April 1981.

6. Woodrow Serion, "Brief Biography of Diego de la Viña," 1954, p. 1 (Typewritten).

towards the Oriental coast to look for wider lands.⁷ They finally found their way to Guihulngan which at that time was a very small *pueblo*. Knowing that Don Diego was prospecting for land, the head of the town, Capitan Pelagio Villegas pointed out to him a thickly forested valley inhabited by *Bukidnons* to the north of Guihulngan which was called Bagawinis. Don Diego named the place "Vallehermoso" and called his plantation "Hacienda Vallehermoso." With half a dozen hired help, he started to clear the area and planted it to corn, tobacco and later to sugar cane.⁸

INSTRUCTIONS AND PREPARATIONS

Don Diego de la Viña was at his hacienda in Vallehermoso when the news came that fighting had started in Negros Occidental.⁹ He immediately sent his son, Jose, by the shortest route to contact General Juan Araneta, Commander of the Negros Occidental Revolutionary Forces, for instructions on what actions to take in Negros Oriental. Through Gen. Araneta, Diego de la Viña was duly commissioned by General Emilio Aguinaldo with the rank of "General de Brigada, Commandante del Ejercito Filipino. Provincia de Negros Oriental."¹⁰

General de la Viña lost no time in dispatching couriers to all principal towns of the province with orders to all *capitanes municipales* to assemble whatever fighting men they could, and to arrest Spaniards in their respective towns, including the friars. They were to join the forces from Vallehermoso for the siege of the capital town of Dumaguete which was defended by *cazadores* and a battalion of civil guards. There were also Spanish forces in Bais, Tanjay and Siaton. All the other towns had detachments of civil guards.

Meanwhile, all the able-bodied men of Hacienda Vallehermoso and of the sitios nearby were conscripted. Arms were self-supplied: bolos, *pinuti*, *talibong*, *bahi*, spears and lances of all sorts were prepared. During the few days before the departure of the rebels the hacienda was harnessed to devise iron armaments, and

7. Ibid.

8. *Memorias de Negros Oriental*, "Report of Gov. P.M. Victor Espada," 1892, p. 355b.

9. On 4 November, the telegraph line between Silay and Bacolod was cut. On 5 November the revolution started and Bacolod capitulated the next day.

10. Woodrow Serion, "A Brief Biography of Diego de la Viña," p. 3.

to supply food and horses. Sledges drawn by carabaos were used to transport supplies.¹¹ Whether it was real patriotism or not that motivated these men, there was no doubt that the strong force behind the spirited preparation was Gen. Diego de la Viña.

THE MARCH TO AND TAKEOVER OF DUMAGUETE

From Hacienda Vallehermoso, Gen. de la Viña and his revolutionary forces began the march to Dumaguete which took them about a week. The southward move to Dumaguete started at 9:30 a.m. on 17 November 1898, and covered a distance of 148 kilometers.¹² The purpose was to liberate the towns along the way and at the same time to persuade the town forces to join the main force as it marched on. The combined forces could then put up a fight in Bais, Tanjay and then lay siege to Dumaguete.

In the town of Guihulngan, the revolutionary forces were greatly reinforced by a large number of recruits through the cooperation of ex-municipal captain Pelagio Villegas, de la Viña's *compadre*. On the banks of the Jinubaan river (La Libertad) Don Pio Banogon and his men joined.¹³ Many more joined as they passed the towns of Jimalalud and Tayasan. No fighting occurred in these towns, for the detachment of civil guards and friars had left earlier for fear of Gen. de la Viña's approaching forces. Most of the *insurrectos* were field hands and many of them willingly joined the march against the hated *catsila*. Others were just carried along by the momentum of the crowd. Still others could not refuse the strict orders of their *agalon* (Landlord). Besides, Gen. de la Viña obliged all able-bodied men along the way to join the cause. But still there were the ignorant masses who were dominated by their fear of both sides, and who ran to hide when they heard that Viñas (sic) was coming.¹⁴

One of the eyewitnesses to the march recalled that there were many *revolucionarios*; some were on horseback while the majority were unshod. The flag of the Republic was carried ahead, followed by Gen. de la Viña who was riding his big white spotted horse.

11. Interview with Dr. Woodrow Serion, Vallehermoso, 2 February 1981.

12. Cuesta, *History of Negros*, p. 456.

13. Serion, *Brief Biography*, p. 4.

14. Interview with Mr. Macario Valencia, Dumaguete, 6 February 1981. An eyewitness to the arrival of Gen. de la Viña's forces in Dumaguete.

When the revolutionary forces arrived in Manjuyod, the civil guards and the priest had left two weeks before.¹⁵ Hence there was no fighting and no destruction. The Capitan municipal Luis Anfone and his men joined the march to Dumaguete.

A brief skirmish took place in Bais, for there was a Spanish detachment there to defend the town. Spanish forces from the northern and southern towns including some planters and friars had converged in Bais. On 15 November the SS *Lourdes* from Iloilo picked up most of the parish priests of the northern towns. Some Spaniards also left Bais and took the same boat. The local insurgents of Bais joined forces with Gen. de la Viña. Realizing that they were very much outnumbered and that to fight further was useless, the Spaniards decided to surrender. This was followed by the arrest of the Spanish planters who decided not to flee because of their sugar interests. Unexpectedly, a Spaniard by the name of D. Esteban and a friar, Pedro Bengoa, decided to join the revolutionary forces.

To be able to plan his strategy for the siege and fight in Dumaguete, Gen. de la Viña waited in Bais until he could get accurate information about the situation in the capital. Welcome news was received when some men from Dumaguete like Pedro Teves, Miguel Patero and Demetrio Larena arrived. They were able to escape early from the capital when they were warned that Gobernador P. M. Antonio Ferrer had incarcerated many prominent residents of Dumaguete.¹⁶ The uncertainty in the capital town had made many residents leave for safer places.

In the meantime, the Spanish officials, friars and soldiers who had converged in Dumaguete grew more and more tense upon hearing the news that Gen. Diego de la Viña and his thousands of revolutionaries were approaching.¹⁷ His reputation as a powerful *cacique* disciplinarian and "tamer" of the Bukidnon's was well known to the Spaniards.¹⁸ No other person in the province could have commanded as much respect and fear from the Spaniards as

15. *Historical Data of Negros Oriental*, compiled by the public school teachers of the province, 1952, Vol. 2, p. 6. National Library.

16. Pedro Teves, "Una Breve Historia de Dumaguete," souvenir program of the conversion of Dumaguete into a chartered city, 24 November 1948.

17. Cuesta, *History of Negros*, p. 456; Communications of Gov. P.M. Antonio Ferrer, Dumaguete, 16 November 1898, Archivo Militar de Segovia, 4a division, Leg. C-3.

18. *Memorias de Negros Oriental*, 1892, p. 356; see also Robustiano Echaus, *Apustes de la Isla de Negros* (Manila, 1894), p. 19.

Gen. Diego de la Viña did. Soon there was so much demoralization and uncertainty among the Spaniards that even regular church work could not be attended to, in spite of the presence of so many priests who had escaped to the Dumaguete parish.

On 17 November 1898, Gov. Antonio Ferrer requisitioned the SS *Bais*, a ship which had been sent by the Recollect Prior of Cebu to evacuate the priests, and put the vessel at the service of all the Spaniards who wanted to leave the province. Many went aboard, but because the ship delayed its departure, many Spaniards transferred to the German ship *Clara* chartered by the *Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas*. This boat promptly left for Cebu on the 22nd of November.¹⁹

As General de la Viña and his forces neared Sibulan on November 23rd, his compadre, Teniente Cornelio Yapsutco came with the news that the Spaniards had left Dumaguete.²⁰ At the approach of the revolutionary forces, the governor, civil employes, remaining friars and loyal Spanish forces embarked on the SS *Bais* at the harbor of Dumaguete and sailed for Cebu on the morning of 23 November 1898.

At first, Gen. de la Viña could not believe that the Spaniards had left Dumaguete without a fight, but everybody received the news with much rejoicing. It was a happy and jubilant throng that entered Dumaguete at noon of 24 November 1898. More than two thousand shabbily clothed and barefoot revolucionarios jammed the dusty north road to the plaza.²¹ Amidst the shouts of "Viva Filipinas", "Mabuhí ang Republica" "Patay na ang mga Catsila," and volley after volley fired into the air, the flag of the Republic was hoisted in front of the convento facing the plaza. The bells in the watch tower kept ringing, bringing people from the barrios to find out why the bells were ringing, and why there was rejoicing and celebration. After the hoisting of the flag, Gen. de la Viña asked Fr. Pedro Bengoa to conduct the first mass of liberated Dumaguete — a fitting way of celebrating the occasion.²²

News of the arrival of the Revolutionary forces quickly spread

19. Cuesta, *History of Negros*, p. 457.

20. Interview with Mrs. Trinidad Teves Locsin, granddaughter of Cornelio Yapsutco, Dumaguete, 15 September 1980. She was twelve years old and was with her grandfather on the occasion.

21. Interview with Mr. Macario Valencia, Dumaguete, 6 February 1981. An eyewitness to the arrival of Gen. de la Viña's forces in Dumaguete.

22. Interview with Mrs. Trinidad T. Locsin.

to the barrios and surrounding towns. The residents who had run away to escape the Spanish purge and the shooting that might take place, started to return to their houses. By evening the houses were lighted and many joined the revelry which continued until the next day at the plaza,²³ for November 25th is the town fiesta of Dumaguete, the feast of the patron saint Catherine of Alexandria.

To Gen. de la Viña it was a moment of victory and thanksgiving, for what he thought was going to be a bloody campaign turned out to be a bloodless one. But a far bigger responsibility lay ahead of him.

On the day Gen. Diego de la Viña and his forces occupied Dumaguete, he circulated a letter to all the towns in Negros Oriental:²⁴

The Republican Revolutionary Forces are now in the capital. The Gobernador Politico-Militar and other officials together with their forces have escaped.

So now, we the Visayans will be the ones to form our government. You should be happy because there are no more Spanish friars and Spaniards from Europe to oppress us. Now is the hour that all of us are quite angry, but even if he is a Spaniard, if he will join us, let us receive and be cordial to him more than before.

Therefore, in a few days I will send a commission who will conduct the election of the officials of the Republican Government in every town.

Therefore, I will wait for your help in giving food to my soldiers, because here in Dumaguete, it is very miserable, for all the money was taken by the Spaniards.

I have another proclamation in Visayan that you should announce within three nights with the flag and music of the Republic, and the deputy.

Salud y Fraternidad-Dumaguete
Nov. 24, 1898 El Jefe Militar
(Sgd.) Diego de la Viña

23. Ibid.

24. PR 91. Folder on Negros Oriental. Documents entitled "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar de las Milicias Expedicionarias de la Costa Oriental de Negros Presidencia de Dauin." Proclamation of Gen. Diego de la Viña to the people of Negros Oriental. 24 November 1898 (in Cebuano), National Library, Filipiniana division, manuscript section. This was the only set of documents saved in the whole island of Negros on this particular period, by the American army. On 27 October 1958 the Philippine Insurgent Records or PR in short, were returned to the Philippines and deposited in the National Library where they are now available to researchers. These are boxes of selected documents, Army and Navy Records, and Provincial Records.

In a few days food supplies started to arrive from Bais, Tanjay, Amlan, Ayungon, Manjuyod, Siaton and Samboanguita. The towns responded immediately, for the news that Dumaguete was already occupied, and that there were no Spanish officials in that town was received with much rejoicing in the other towns. Inspired by the response of the people, Gen. de la Viña circulated another letter in Cebuano the next day, Nov. 25th. This time, he addressed it to all the people:²⁵

Filipinos!

The heavy chain of bondage that was put on us by Spain have fallen to the ground, for they were broken by the fierce Revolutionary Forces of our Republic. The light has come to our nation for we know how to pray and we know how to administer peacefully and orderly the affairs of our Republic.

Filipinos! ! Prepare yourselves and help me drive away from our shores the Spaniards who are dirty and oppressive. Receive and welcome the Republican forces who have redeemed you.

Filipinos! ! Long live our liberty! Long live the Republican government! Let us turn our backs from the government of the Spaniards and the friars!

Salud y Fraternidad-Dumaguete
Nov. 25. El Jefe Militar
(Sgd.) Diego de la Viña

THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

Aside from the liberation of the province from the Spaniards, the other major instruction of Gen. Juan Araneta, of Negros Occidental, to Gen. de la Viña was to organize a Provincial Revolutionary government immediately. The next day, after the occupation of Dumaguete, Gen. de la Viña, together with the *ilustrados*, led in convoking an assembly for the election of officers for the Revolutionary Council of the province. The meeting was held in the house of *Teniente* Cornelio Yapsutco.

The results of the election were as follows:²⁶

25. PR 92, "Ordanes de Jefatura Militar," Proclamation of Military Chief Diego de la Viña to the people, Dumaguete, 25 November 1898.

26. PR 91, "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," Letter of Pres. Demetrio Larena to all the towns of the province informing them of the results of the provincial election. Dumaguete, 26 November 1898.

Presidente	Demetrio Larena
Delegate of War	Diego de la Viña
Delegate of Treasury, Taxes & Property	Laureano Flores
Delegate of Development	Miguel Patero
Delegate of Justice	Jose de la Pena
Delegate of Government	Hermenigildo Villanueva
Delegate of Agriculture & Commerce	Pedro Teves
Secretary	Francisco Leytoria
Sub-Secretary	Regino Apostol
Military Chief of the North	Luis Rotea
Military Chief of the South	Meliton Larena

A major concern of the newly organized government was directed towards the defense of the province against Spanish retaliation, and that could come only from the sea. For the security of the beaches, everyone was enjoined to be alert, to report immediately and to fight the enemy. To provide a means of defense, Gen. de la Viña ordered the digging of trenches along the shores of the province, especially on those breaches where the depth of the water was enough to allow big ships to anchor. Night and day the natives held a round-the-clock watch, and bolos, bow and arrows, pinuti, bamboo staves and piles of stones were prepared along the beaches.²⁷ It was not until the last week of December, 1898, when Cebu and Iloilo fell into the hands of the Revolutionary forces, that the possibility of Spanish counterattacks had lessened.

Adding to the troubles of the period were men from Cebu who took advantage of the confused situation by exacting taxes from the people on the pretext that they were agents of the Malolos government. Delegate of War de la Viña ordered the arrest of these men including the crew of the ship, if the ship had no other purpose but to convey these men collecting *cedulas* improperly marked KATIPUNAN.²⁸

Another major threat to the peace and order of the province came from the depredations, extortions and threats of the *Babaylanes*, *Pulahanes* and *Tulisanes*. Although called by different names and under different leaders, the objectives and strategies of these groups were basically the same. They were socialistic, anti-

27. Interview with Mr. Macario Valencia.

28. PR 91, "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," Order of Del. of War de la Viña to military chiefs of the towns. Vallehermoso, 6 February 1899.

Spaniards and were led by disgruntled leaders from the lowlands who escaped to the mountains as victims of Spanish abuses or who were simply lawless elements. They lived in hiding in the thickly forested mountains of Negros. To achieve their ends, they resorted to robbery, murder and destruction of property.²⁹

Escaped prisoners had been a problem since early Spanish times, for the jails were not constructed of strong materials. Jailbreaks happened in the towns frequently, and from time to time orders were issued to apprehend escaped prisoners.

A few weeks after the takeover of Dumaguete, many soldiers began to desert the army. Desertions could be attributed to the inconveniences of army life, and many could be homesick. A good number of the revolucionarios were field hands who were forced by their landlords to join the march to Dumaguete. When finally they were released from the army, Del. of War de la Viña observed that many of them did not strive to make a living but just roamed about under the coconut trees, gambling, cockfighting and looking for quarrels with other people. It was hard for them to go back to plowing the fields and weeding the plants after they were released from the army. De la Viña ordered that people who were not working would be arrested and made to work in the *obras publicas* as punishment for their idleness.³⁰

A rampant vice among the people was the smoking of opium. Del. of War de la Viña gave the following order:³¹

All those who are caught smoking opium will be arrested by the justice officer of the town. He will be brought to the capital and I will retain him while he is still enslaved to the vice. For those who are moneyed, they will be fined five hundred pesos.

The sources of revenue established during Spanish times remained, though a slight modification was introduced to make taxes less burdensome. The Philippine Independent Church took over the parishes and Pres. D. Larena ordered the search and confiscation of all property of Spanish priests and even the ornaments of the churches were taken. But in general there was very negligible destruction of life and property in Negros Oriental as a

29. Cuesta, *History of Negros*, p. 432.

30. PR 91. "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," Order of Del. of War de la Viña, 24 January 1899.

31. Ibid.

result of the revolution, except for the pursuits of livelihood like farming and fishing which were left by the men who joined the cause.

RESISTANCE TO AMERICAN RULE

The foremost concern of the new government by the time the Spanish threat subsided was the coming of the Americans to impose their sovereignty on the island. This, however, was to be with the cooperation of the leaders of Negros Occidental. In Negros Oriental, the first weeks of November, 1898 had been busy days of preparation for the march to Dumaguete. Efforts had been primarily focused on the expulsion of the Spaniards from the province. But De la Viña and his men were not aware that the Negros Occidental Provisional Revolutionary Government had sent Commissioner Jose Ereñeta to ask for American protection. The Negros provisional government approved the creation of a *Federal Republic*, or a cantonal form of government. They believed that this form of government was best fitted "to attain the aspirations of liberty and independence, not only for Negros, but for the whole country."³² The proposal was approved without representatives from Negros Oriental, although the cantonal government was to consist of both Oriental and Occidental Negros. In Bacolod, the American flag was raised on 12 February with a volley of twenty-one cannon shots, although not a single American was present.³³ When the Congress of Deputies of Negros Oriental held its first session, a letter from the Bacolod government leaders was read before Congress. The letter had arrived the previous day from the Negros Occidental Cantonal Government, asking the Negros Oriental officials to raise the American flag. This shocked the Negros Oriental leaders and officials who considered their newly organized government closely bound to Pres. Aguinaldo's government. They refused to raise the American flag and be a part of the Negros Cantonal government.

Del. of War de la Viña came to realize that if the province was to remain loyal to Pres. E. Aguinaldo, it had to fight both American and Negros Occidental forces. He issued order No. 229 to the

32. S.D., P.I.R., 77.3, Box 256-9, Microfilm section, Filipiniana division, National Library.

33. Ma. Fe. H. Romero, *Negros Occidental Between Two Foreign Powers (1888-1909)* (Bacolod: Negros Occidental Historical Commission, 1974), p. 134.

zone commanders to be relayed immediately to the local military chiefs:³⁴

If any column from that side (Neg. Occ.) comes here under any pretext, we shall remain faithful to the Filipino flag for we have sworn to its constitution. . . They (Neg. Occ. troops and Americans) have no right to interfere in our province, much more to disturb the public order. If they enter our towns, we shall be obliged to throw them out by force.

Anti-American feelings were at their height at this moment, and Del. of War de la Viña's order No. 229 included the further conscription of all males from eighteen to forty years old in all towns to comprise a fighting force. Each soldier was to provide himself with weapons and was to fight for the defense of the towns.

To persuade the Oriental leaders to unite in raising the American flag, the popular and much respected Gen. Juan Araneta was sent to Dumaguete to convoke a "Magna Junta" (big meeting) of provincial and town officials.³⁵ Arriving in Dumaguete on 9 April 1899, Gen. Araneta first held private talks with Military Chief de la Viña and Pres. D. Larena. On 11 April he called a general meeting of provincial and town officials, including the deputies. Gen. Araneta explained the advantages of being under American protection and the futility of fighting against a far more superior power. He presented the draft of the constitution which had been prepared by the committee and asked the delegates to compare it with the Constitution of the Malolos Republic of Pres. Emilio Aguinaldo and see which was better adopted to the government of a free people. He answered every question satisfactorily and convincingly. The result was that the provincial council agreed to send a commission to Bacolod.³⁶ Pres. D. Larena was the chairman of the commission from Negros Oriental "to discuss and revise" the constitution of the *Federal Republic of Negros*.

Del. of War de la Viña issued an order that while the commissioners were in Bacolod no flag of any kind should be raised. Also, if any troops from Negros Occidental or their American allies would come to the province, by order of Philippine authorities,

34. PR 91, "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," 22 March 1899 order.

35. PR 91, "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," 9 April letter of Pres. D. Larena.

36. James Smith Report to the Adjutant General of the Visayan Military District. 13 June 1899, p. 341.

they should be treated as friends.³⁷

Twenty days had passed since the commissioners left for Bacod and not a single communication was sent to Dumaguete.³⁸ An explanation for this was that the commissioners were becoming more convinced of the advantages of being under American protection. Another reason Pres. D. Larena gave later was that he did not want any trouble to arise before he could make a personal explanation for their decision in favor of a Federal Republic of Negros under American protection. There were no more orders from Del. of War de la Viña who also seems to have become impatient at the lack of reports from the commissioners. It was also an indication that he was not yet fully convinced of the idea of submitting to American rule.

Pres. D. Larena came home before the Congress ended. Whatever were his reasons for not staying until May 3rd, the fact remained that he had been fully convinced of the advantages of a Federal Republic of Negros. The American flag was raised in Dumaguete on April 30th. Interim Pres. H. Villanueva circularized a letter to the towns, much to the surprise of the local officials, reporting that Pres. D. Larena had already arrived the day before, and the American Flag had already been raised in Dumaguete. He enjoined the towns to follow in raising the American flag not later than 6 May. He further wrote:³⁹

. . . In view of our weakness, let us receive with gratitude and enthusiasm in the towns as we have in the capital, the holy protection that the Americans offer and we are hopefully confident that with them, the future will be brighter and stronger . . .

The crisis came when the rest of the Commissioners arrived without a copy of the approved constitution. The residents of Bais and Tanjay, where the Tagalog agents had strong influence on the leadership, were indignant towards the commissioners who arrived on 9 May.⁴⁰ The insurgents of the two towns lost no time planning for the hauling down of the American flag. At daybreak of 11 May, the American flags in Bais and Tanjay were hauled down

37. PR 91, "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," Order of Del. of War de la Viña, 13 April 1899.

38. SD Box 2, folder 29, document No. SD 29.8, p. 3 Filipiniana division, National Library.

39. PR 91. "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," Letter of Interim Pres. H. Villanueva. Dumaguete, 1 May 1899 (in Spanish).

40. Romero, *Negros Occidental*, p. 165.

without objections from the residents.⁴¹ When he heard what had happened in Bais and Tanjay, Pres. D. Larena sent a commission composed of provincial officials to convince the leaders of these towns to raise the American flag again. In addition, the commission was to convince them of the advantages of American rule and the futility of resistance to it. They were not successful. As a result, Pres. D. Larena went back to Bacolod to confer with Gen. James Smith on the developments in Bais and Tanjay. The decision was to convoke another "Magna Junta" where the Federal Constitution would be explained, and to send American troops to Negros Oriental.⁴²

Back in Dumaguete on 15 May 1899, the Military Chief of zones had received a letter from the headquarters of Delegate of War Diego de la Viña stating:

I have come to a decision that on this date, I am giving up all the responsibilities as Military Chief and Delegate of War of the province that I have been performing, in order to recover my health. The office and all that are attached to it are formally turned over to the one appointed, Sr. Hermenigildo Villanueva.⁴³

On the same day, 15 May, the newly appointed Military Chief and Delegate of War of the province, Hermenigildo Villanueva sent a letter to the Military Chiefs of zones, informing them that,

... Having been presented to take over the responsibilities of Provincial Military Chief and Delegate of War. . . I take over the positions immediately.⁴⁴

Since the leaders of the province had already accepted American sovereignty, Gen. de la Viña considered his services as a soldier and as a public servant no longer necessary. Gen. de la Viña decided to go by way of Cebu on his way back to Vallehermoso.⁴⁵ He could not bear to see his compatriots and the towns he had liberated from Spanish rule submit to another foreign rule. It

41. Box 254-9, 77/1. Negros Island. Report of Vicente Lucban, General Chief of Troops for Samar and Leyte. On Affairs in Negros (in Spanish). (Microfilm section, Filipiniana division, National Library, 12 June 1899).

42. James Smith Report to the Adjutant General of the Visayan Military District, 18 June 1899, p. 342.

43. PR 91, "Ordanes de la Jefatura Militar," Letter of Delegate of War de la Viña to Military Chief of the South, Meliton Larena, Dumaguete, (in Spanish), 15 May 1899.

44. Ibid., Letter of Delegate of Government H. Villanueva to Meliton Larena. Dumaguete, 15 May 1899, (in Spanish).

45. Gen. Vicente Lucban's Report, On Affairs in Negros, 12 June 1899.

must have broken his heart to know, as he sailed away from Dumaguete, that his dreams for an independent Philippines in general, and a free Negros Oriental in particular, had not become a reality.

CLOSING YEARS

General Diego de la Viña returned to his hacienda in Vallehermoso to hang up his sword, put away his gun and live again the life of a gentleman-farmer. He saw the need for producing more crops to recover from the famine and other ravages of the Revolution.⁴⁶ Soon, there was much plowing, planting, and harvesting of crops in Hacienda Vallehermoso. The forests receded, while his coconut and sugarcane plantation expanded. Unemployment was then unknown in Vallehermoso. Many ex-revolucionarios came to him and offered to work in his hacienda.⁴⁷ They had developed an attachment to their general, whom they admired and looked up to.

To his tenants and the other people of the community, the general was judge, consultant, defender and benefactor in times of need. As judge, he settled quarrels in his "hall of justice," and as consultant, he acted on problems brought to him for decision. The people looked up to him for protection from the tulisanes and Babaylanes, who were so afraid of Gen. de la Viña that they hesitated to molest his hacienda.

Finally, he led the move to make Vallehermoso a pueblo. It was through his efforts that the barrio of Vallehermoso was separated from Guihulngan and was inaugurated as a separate town on 1 January 1913. It was a fulfillment of his dream that the beautiful valley east of Canlaon Volcano would one day become a town. To give the municipality a good start, Don Diego de la Viña donated the townsite at sitio Kanglambat, and there he built a municipal hall, a school building, and a church and convent.

Although not an official of the town, he was consulted and had a say in all matters. For more than twenty years after the revolution, Don Diego de la Viña was looked up to as the "Tigulang,"

46. At this time there was a smallpox epidemic raging in the province that occupied the attention of the American soldiers who were kept busy vaccinating the people and placing them under quarantine. On 27 September 1902 cholera epidemic appeared in Negros Oriental. See also *Report of the Philippine Commission 1902*, Part 1, p. 273.

47. Interview with Mrs. Baleria Española. Canlaon City, 14 April 1981.

meaning, Grand Old Man, of Vallehermoso.⁴⁸ Don Diego went around his hacienda on his favorite horse named "Trumpeta," a big white-and-brown spotted horse.⁴⁹ His birthdays were lavishly celebrated.⁵⁰ A steamboat was often chartered to fetch friends and relatives from Iloilo, Bacolod, Capiz, Bais and Cebu. In his later days, he became more fastidious with food and became a vegetarian. In fact, he did not smoke, drink or gamble, except that he admired beautiful women.⁵¹ As a lover of music, he always had someone to play the harp for him.⁵² He lived a quiet life, with deep satisfaction over the fact that he turned into a thriving hacienda with a *poblacion*, what before had been a forest inhabited by wild Bukidnons. To crown it all, he led the liberation of Negros Oriental from Spanish rule, serving his province in its hour of need. After long suffering with diabetes, he died of a heart attack on 27 March 1920, at the age of seventy-one. Thus ended the life of a man who, for love of country and freedom, dedicated a considerable part of his life to serving his beloved province of Negros Oriental.

48. Interview with Dr. Woodrow Serion.

49. Interview with Mrs. Baleria Española.

50. Interview with Mrs. Natividad de la Viña Bautista, a grandniece of Don Diego de la Viña, who used to manage the receptions. Canlaon City. 14 April 1981.

51. Interview with Mrs. Baleria Española.

52. Interview with Mr. Emeliano de la Viña, grandson of Diego de la Viña, at Canlaon City, on 23 December 1980.